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Access to Spatial Datasets Using CONTENTdm

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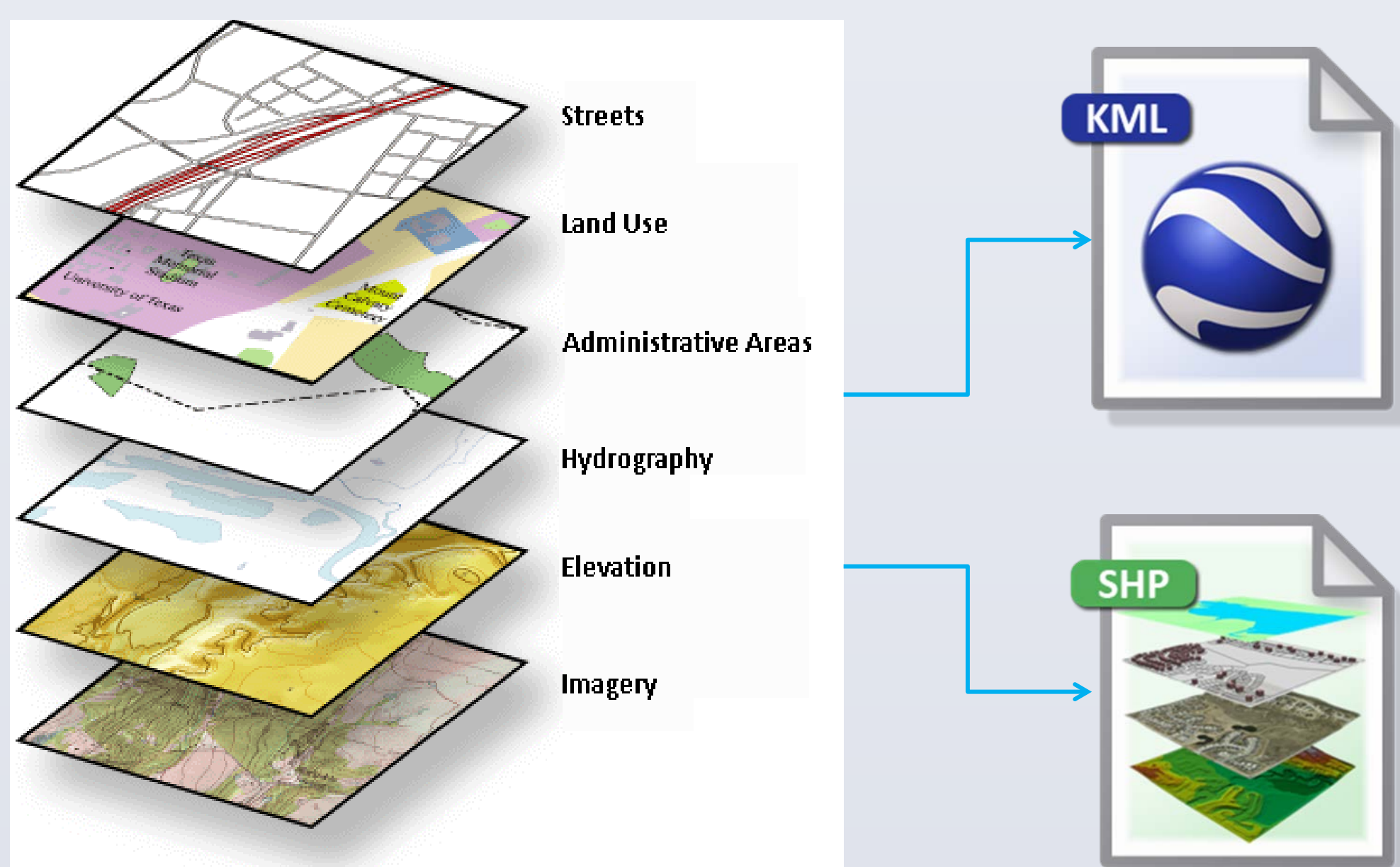
Introduction

THE CHALLENGE: The Data Librarian was frequently acting as an intermediary for faculty and students requiring access to specific local spatial datasets. Users indicated a strong preference for accessing data themselves but were often unaware of the datasets available or what was included within them. In addition, usage of these particular datasets was restricted to faculty, student and staff who signed the licensing conditions.

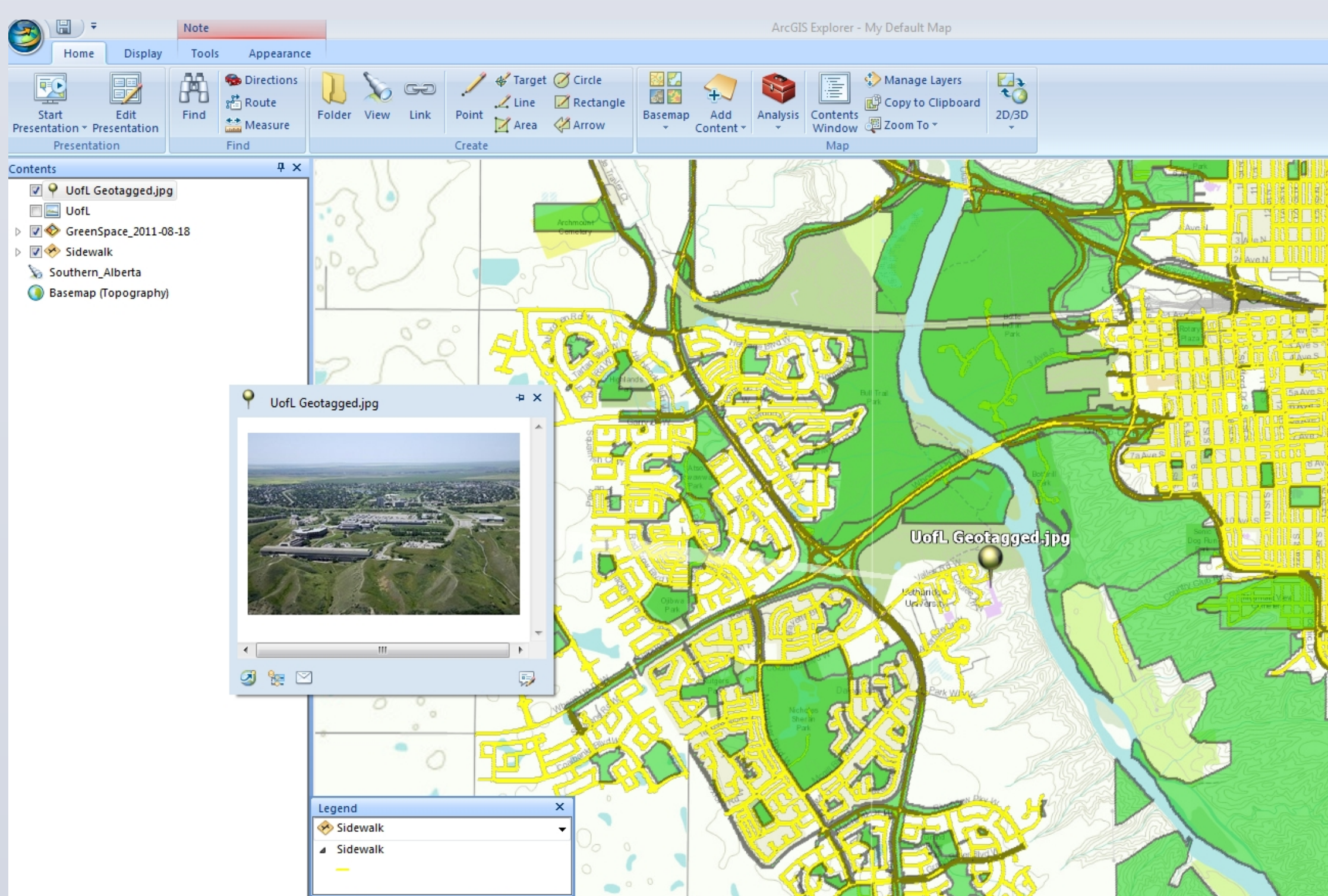
THE SOLUTION: The Library uses CONTENTdm tool as a discovery tool to allow students and faculty to identify and access a selection of licensed spatial datasets stored on the University of Lethbridge Library Intranet. Datasets are hosted on the Library's Intranet and made available to users as collection of component files once they've agreed to the license and been verified as members of the University community.

About Spatial Datasets

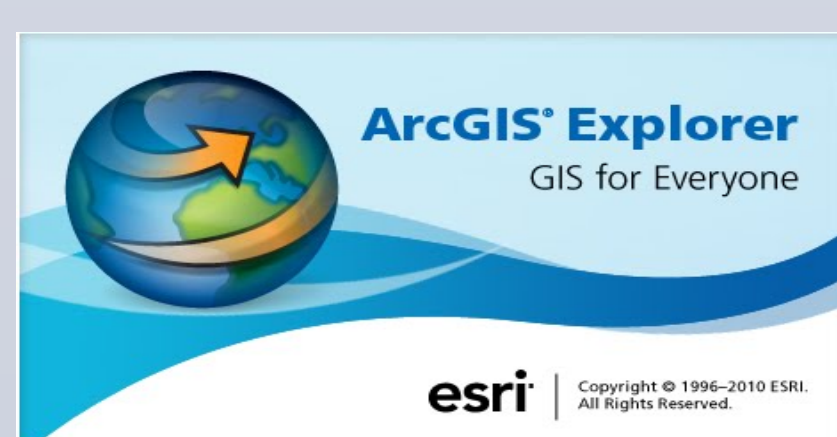
- Also known as *geospatial data*, this data identifies the geographic location of features and boundaries of the Earth. Spatial data is accessed, manipulated, analyzed and/or mapped using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).



- Custom maps are created using GIS software (e.g., ArcGIS, Google Earth) with files containing geospatial data (e.g., Shapefiles, Keyhole Markup Language files, etc.). The map below uses City of Lethbridge *sidewalk* and *greenspace* shapefiles.

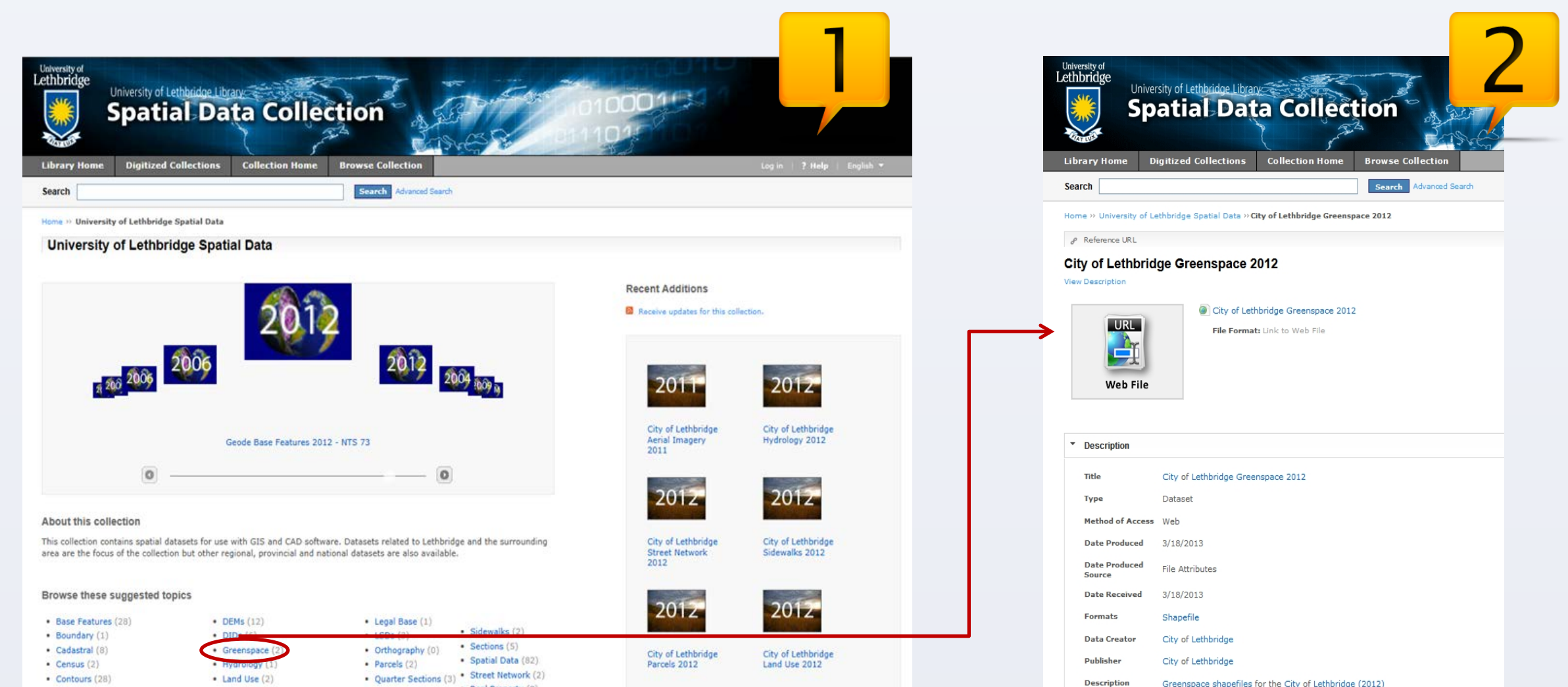


- ArcGIS Explorer is free tool which can be used to combine spatial data with free map services. The University of Lethbridge Library has produced instructional videos on how to use ArcGIS Explorer program with spatial data from the Library collection to create custom maps.

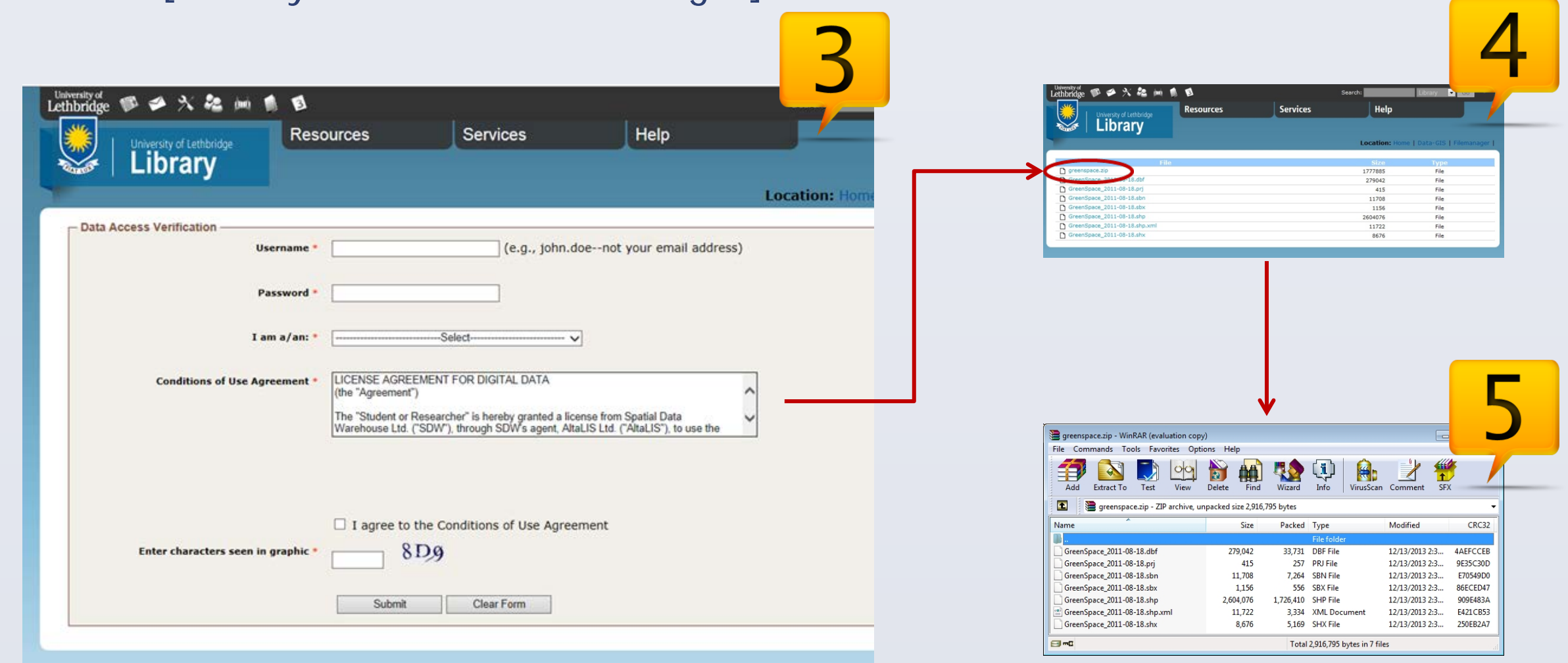


How CONTENTdm is Being Used to Enable Discovery of Datasets

- User Visits the University Library's [Spatial Data Collection](#) "Landing Page".
- User Searches or Browses to Find Desired Item in the Collection [CONTENTdm].



- User Clicks *Link to Web File* and Is Sent to Verification Page [Library Intranet].
- Once Verified, User Can Browse Listing of All GIS Files Associated with Selected Spatial Dataset [Library Intranet / FileManager].



- User Downloads Individual Files or Complete Datafile (.ZIP File), Imports Files into GIS Software and Creates Map.

What Has Resulted From This Initiative?

- A means of providing unmediated (i.e., "self-serve") access to faculty and students requiring large spatial data files.
- A means of ensuring access to licensed data files is restricted to faculty and students at the University of Lethbridge as per data provider requirements.
- A tool for users to discover content within available spatial data files by keyword search or browsing "Suggested Topics".
- Statistics are being collected detailing the # of dataset downloads and identification of user groups.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

- Metadata schema for the collection is adequate for discovery purposes although non-standard; requires a detailed review from our metadata specialist.
- Documented workflow for including new datafiles in the collection involves additional preparatory work prior to uploading item descriptions into CONTENTdm (e.g., file preparation, adding folders to Intranet, determining URLs).
- Library Intranet crashed in June, 2013 and some datafiles un-recoverable; improved backup procedures subsequently put in place.
- Verification of users via Single sign-on (SSO) is being explored; access to files is limited to on-campus users only at present.

Acknowledgement

Special thanks to Marcel Jepson for his involvement in configuring the FileManager application as well as members of the Digitization Team @ the U. of Lethbridge Library for their contributions. For details contact rhys.stevens@uleth.ca.